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POETRY.

From the Home Journal.

Encouragement to the Lesser Poets.

In a Poem recently delivered at the Smithsonian Institute, Washington, JOHN R. THOMPSON, our brilliant brother editor comes out as the champion of that fast increasing legion, the MIDDLING POETS. Well—he has thus made himself the tutelary saint of probably the largest single class of aspirants for this worlds honors! Hear how he comforts them :—

"The bard remembers, and many fitly quotes
(Though doubtless many have the line by rote,)
That neither gods nor men, in their distress,
Nor yet the columns of the weekly press,
Can view as other than a dreadful wrong
The lowliest offerings of tuneful song—
A line which means as certain critics think,
That smaller poets should not deal in ink,
And that until the mighty prophets come
The part of Poesy is to be dumb.
Your Miltons, Goethes, are an age apart,
Meanwhile shall no one touch the world's sad heart?
The stately aloe's snowy bloom appears
But once, we know, within a hundred years;
Because, forsooth, the aloe is the glory
Of Chatsworth's notable conservatory,
Shall not the modest daisy from the sod
Turn its meek eyes in beauty up to God?
In nature's daily prayer, when comes the dawn
To tell its beads upon the dewy lawn,
Shall the sweet matins of the rosy hours
Miss the pure incense of the *little* flowers?"

* * * * * * *

"But while the amaranth waits for kingly brows,
Some laural wreaths our grateful love allows
To him whose sunny genius lifts to light
The meanest objects of our daily sight:
Who seeks to brighten still the links that bind
In blest communion all of human kind;
Or passion's tempest in the breast would calm
With some sweet, lowly, penitential psalm;
Such poets sow the seeds of truth and beauty,
To blossom into holy faith and duty—
And though the tares of selfishness and pride
Sprung up to choke them upon every side,
And many a tender shoot the world erases
From the hard pavements of its market-places,
Some fall on friendly soil, warm hearts and true,
Where watered by affection's kindliest dew,
They stretch their boughs into the upper air,
And in due season richer fruitage bear
Than fabled branches hung with globes of gold,
Some thirty, fifty, some an hundred fold!"

MISCELLANEOUS.

Thrilling Sketch!

Alexander Dumas Pere is furnishing sensation items from Russia. Here is an instance from his own experience, in the highest order of the French school of intensity :—

We left the room with the turnkey behind us, and walked on until we found ourselves opposite the prison. The gaoler opened it, went in and lighted a lantern. We followed. We went down ten steps, passed a row of dungeons, then down ten more, but did not stop. We went down five more, and then stopped at the one marked No. II. He gave a silent signal; it seemed in this abode of the dead as if he had lost the power of speech. There was at this time a frost of at least twenty degrees outside. At the depth where we found ourselves it was mingled with a damp which penetrated to the bone; my marrow was frozen, and yet I wiped the perspiration from my brow. The door opened, we went down six damp and slippery steps, and found ourselves in a dungeon of six square feet. I fancied by the light of the lantern, that I saw a human form moving in it. The governor remained on the last step and said to the prisoner

"Rise and dress yourself."

I had a curiosity to know to whom this order was addressed.

"Turn on the light," said I to the gaoler.

I then saw a thin and pallid old man rise up. He had evidently been immured in this dungeon in the same clothes he had on when arrested, but they had fallen off him peacemeal, and he was only dressed in a ragged pelisse.—Through the rags, his naked, bony shivering body could be seen. Perhaps this body had been covered with splendid garments, perhaps the ribbons of most noble orders had once crossed his panting chest. At present he was only a living skeleton that had lost rank, dignity, name, and was called No. II. He rose, and wrapped himself in the fragments of his ragged pelisse, without uttering a complaint; his body was bowed down, conquered by prison damp, time—it might be hunger. His eye was haughty almost menacing.

"It is good,' said the governor. 'Come.'

He was the first to go out.

The prisoner threw a parting glance on his cell, his stone bench, his water jug, and rotten straw. He uttered a sigh; yet it was impossible that he could regret anything of this.—He followed the governor, and passed before me.

I shall never forget the glance he turned upon me in passing, and the reproach that was concentrated in it.

"So young," it seemed to say, "and already obeying tyranny."

I turned away; that glance had pierced my heart like a dagger. He passed the door of the dungeon. How long was it since he entered it? Perhaps he did not know himself. He must have ceased for a long time counting days and nights. On reaching the governor's door we found two sleighs waiting. The prisoner was ordered into the one that had brought us, and we followed him, the governor by his side, I in front. The other sledge was occupied by four soldiers.

Where were we going? I knew not.—What were we going to do? I was equally ignorant. I had only to see—the action itself did not concern me.

We started.

Through my position, the old man's knees were between mine. I felt them tremble. The governor was wrapped in his furs. I was buttoned up in my military frock, and yet the cold reached us. The prisoner was almost naked, but the governor had offered him no coverings. For a moment I thought of taking off my coat and offering it to him.

The governor guessed my intention.

"It is not worth while" he said.

Soon we reached the Nava again, and our sledge took the direction of Cronstradt. The wind came off the Baltic and blew furiously; the sleet cut our faces. Tho' our eyes had become accustomed to the darkness, we could not see ten yards before us.

At last we stopped in the midst of a furious storm. We must have been about a league and a half from St. Petersburg. The governor got off the sledge, and went up to the other. The soldiers had already got off, holding the tool they had been ordered to bring.

"Cut a hole in the ice," the governor said to them.

I could not refrain a cry of terror. I began to apprehend.

"Ah!" the old man uttered with an accent resembling the laugh of a skeleton, "then the Empress does still remember me!"

Of what Empress was he talking? Three had passed away in succession—Annie, Elizabeth and Catharine. It was evident he still believed he was living under one of them, and he did not know even the name of the man who ordered his death.

What was the obscurity of the night compared with that of the tomb!

The four soldiers then set to work. They broke the ice with their hammers, cut it with their axes, and raised the blocks with the lever. All at once they started back: the ice was broken; the water was rising.

"Come down," the governor said to the old man. The order was useless, for he had already done so. Kneeling on the ice, he was praying fervently.

The governor gave an order in a low tone to the soldiers; then he came back to my side, for I had left the sledge. In a minute the prisoner rose.

"I am ready," he said.

The four soldiers rushed upon him.

I turned my eyes away, but though I did not see I heard the noise of a body hurled into the abyss. In spite of myself, I turned round. The old man had disappeared. I forgot that I had no right to give orders, but shouted to the driver, "away! away!"

"Stop!" cried the governor. The sledge which had already moved forward stopped again.

"All is not finished," the governor said to me in French.

"What have we to do?" I asked.

"Wait," he replied.

We waited half an hour.

"The ice has set," said one of the soldiers.

"Art thou sure?"

He struck the spot where the hole had so lately yawned: the water had become solid again.

"We can go," said the governor.

The horses started at a full gallop, and in less than ten minutes we reached the fortress.

How Drouth Benefits the Soil.

"Dry and hot! Hot and dry! How much everything suffers for the want of rain!" exclaims the farmer, as the empty clouds melt day after day, from his sight. And it is a sad scene now presented in the country in many places. We need not recall it for our readers—we would rather invite them to a brighter side of the picture. That seasons of drouth—so often recurring, and so injurious to our summer crops—should still prove beneficial to the soil, seems strange but chemical science shows us that drouths are one of the material causes to restore the constituents of crops, and renovate long cultivated soils, the 'why and wherefore' of this, we may here reproduce, condensed from a paper by Professor Higgings, Chemist of the State Agricultural Society of Maryland.

The loss of the mineral matter from the soil, results from the fact that it is taken up by the growing crops and also carried away by the surface water flowing into the streams, and thence into the sea. These two causes are always in operation, and were there no sources of supply, would in time render the world a barren waste. The diminution which arise from the continued cropping is in part restored by manures, and the same is true of the constituents washed from the soil by surface drainage; but this supply is small, uncertain, and of limited application, and Providence has provided a natural means to restore lost mineral constituents to our arable land. At intervals, drouths occur to bring up from the deeper under soil, food for the use of plants when the rains shall again fall to dissolve and bring them into action.

A drouth acts upon the moisture in the earth as follows: During the dry weather, a continual evaporation takes place from the surface soil, above that supplied by rain and dew, which creates a vacuum (so far as the water in the surface soil is concerned) that is at once filled by water rising from the subsoil—extending deeper and deeper as the drouth continues and the moisture is exhaled—a circulation of water in the earth the reverse of that which takes place in wet weather. This progress to the surface of the water in the earth, manifests itself strikingly in the drying up of springs and wells, and streams which are supported by springs.

Not only is the water thus brought to the surface of the earth, but also all the water holds in solution. There are salts of lime and magnesia, of potash and soda, or indeed whatever the subsoil or top strata of the earth may contain. The water, on reaching the surface, is evaporated, but leaves behind its lime and potash, its phosphates, silicates, carbonates, and salts—all indispensable to the growth of the vegetable products of the farm. Rain water as it falls will dissolve but a small portion of those substances; but when it sinks into the earth, it then becomes strongly imbued with carbonic acid from the decomposition of the vegetable matter in the soil, and thus acquires the property of readily dissolving minerals on which before it could have but little effect.

Several experiments tried by Professor Higgings, go to show this action of drouth in bringing mineral matters from a depth to the surface of the soil. In one case he placed a solution of chloride of barium in the bottom of a glass cylinder and then filled it with dry soil. After a long exposure to the rays of the sun, the surface of the soil was tested with sulphuric acid, and gave copious precipitate of sulphate of baryta. Chloride of lime, sulphate of soda, and carbonate of potash, were experimented upon in like manner, and upon the application of proper tests, the surface of the soil showed their presence in large quantities, drawn up by the rising of the water from underneath, as in the case of drouth.

The parched earth—all vegetation dwarfed and withered by heat—seems suffering under a curse, but it is only an affliction for the present—"a blessing in disguise" for the future. "The early and later rain," may produce at once abundant crops, but dry weather is needed to bring to the surface from the depths of the earth, where else it would be forever unemployed, food for future harvests. It is Nature's ordinance for keeping up the fertilization of the cultivated soil.—*Country Gentleman.*

NORTH CAROLINA, Aug. 6 1859.

ED. REGISTER:—In fulfilling my agreement to give you some description of Southern things as I see them, I hardly know where to begin; but as our first impressions come by the eye, I will first speak of soil and climate.—As to surface, this region might pass for an Illinois prairie; for I have not found more than one or two little spots with sufficient inclination to be noticed by the eye. The soil is a reddish clay, with a superstratum of white sand. The clay seems to deepen in color as we go down; near the surface, or when exposed by the shifting of the sand, it has a yellow tinge; in Rail-road cuts I have seen it brighter, approaching a blood red, but without liveliness or gloss. Between it and the sand the line of separation is quite distinct; in a well I saw dug the clay appears, red, hard, and easily distinguishable, after the removal of about a foot of sand. It tinges all the rivers, and makes "tawny Tibers" of them all. More dirty, forbidding things cannot be found; no Naaman, however leprous, could possibly hope that washing in them would make him clean. I made one trial of a small creek near by, on a hot day, and came out farther from cleanliness than ever.—The mingling, not union, of sand and clay gives a curious patch-work look to the country. Out of the dull whitish sand (which has the one peculiarity of being very hard where not trodden by horses) now and then peeps a dark spot of clay, like the red patches sometimes seen on old houses, when the weather has worn off the more modern white outside. The total want of lime is artificially supplied in part by marl, obtained from pits excavated for the purpose; I have sometimes found exhausted ones in the "clearings,"—deep, lonely-looking, like the wells of the giants in ancient giant-days.

A stranger from a limestone country will have tender thought here for the "old oaken bucket." The water is warm and at first indescribably nauseous. For a time I realized in some degree the nature of suffering from thirst; like snow, it increased thirst, instead of allaying it; I fairly began to reconcile myself to the prospect of playing the principal part in the drama of "Tantalus; or, the Peisler in the midst of Water," and even now, I look forward to a draught from a Vermont well as a physical promise for the future. In vain did I disolve lime in it, I had to content myself with apples and cucumbers.

The wells are mere pits, square or round sunk in the clay, and without lining of any kind; the chain pumps is much used, but the ancient well-sweep, which I always had a secret affection for, is more common. I saw one well which was a simple hole in a mound of fiery-colored clay; and its water looked hardly more fit to drink than that in the vats of a tan-yard.

From my window I see a stretch of woods in every direction; pine is the common tree, with several kinds of oak, and others which I do not know. The most attractive feature I have yet seen is the roads, which are not belts over open, cultivated inhabited country, like our own, but they wind through the woods, forming an avenue barely wide enough for a carriage, and to say this is to describe them as far as it can be. The only similar place which I know in Vermont is one which Lake Dunmore tourists may remember,—the long hill through the woods, as you approach from Middlebury, just before descending to to the Lake. These woods are delightful, if one but owns good horse-flesh, and when the wind sighs through the pines overhead the passer may think the whole of "Hyperion," or any other "melancolie" thing. When riding thro' them, I am doubtful whether to choose the poetry of a horse's gallop, or the slavers poetry of a walk and the woods themselves.

But their very simplicity is puzzling to the stranger. Once in them, there are neither points of the compass, sun nor finger-posts, signs nor foot-prints. The question is, whether,—forwards or backwards; or of a fork which road. Nothing is visible except the road and the woods lining it; one might pass a city twenty rods to the right without seeing it. If taken from his horse, on a strange road, and led blindfold a few times back and forth, a man could not possibly tell from which direction he came, unless by a chance glimpse at the sun. I was walking over a plantation alone one day, and having entered a piece of woods by a field of cotton, I walked a long way, and took the same path on returning, of course,—but the field of cotton was now a field of corn,—which I note as one of the strange sights a man sees in traveling.

In my next I will speak of some general and particular characteristics of Southern life.

Truly Yours. —.

A LOW VOICE IN WOMEN.—Yes we agree with the old poet who said that a low, soft voice was an "excellent thing in a woman." Indeed we feel inclined to go much further than he has on the subject, and call it her crowning charm. No matter what other attractions she may have; She may be as fair as the Trojan Helen, and as learned as the famous Hypatia of ancient times; she may have all the accomplishments considered requisite at the present day, and yet if she lacks a low sweet voice, she can never be really fascinating. How often the spell of beauty is rudely broken by coarse loud talking. How often you are irresistibly drawn to a plain, unassuming woman, whose soft, silvery notes render her positively attractive. Besides, we fancy we can judge of the character by the voice; the bland, smooth, fawning tone seems to us to betoken deceit and hypocrisy, as invariably as the musical, subdued voice indicate genuine refinement. In the social circle how pleasant it is to hear the sex talk in that low key, which always characterises the true lady. In the sanctuary of home, how such a voice soothes the fretful child, and cheers the weary husband. How sweetly its cadence floats around the sick chamber, and the dying bed; with what solemn melody do they breathe a prayer for the departing soul.

Ah, yes a low, soft voice is an "excellent thing in a woman."

A humorist who always had a reserve of jokes, was supposed to have *fun-ded* his wit.

OLD MEN.—Rev. Dr. Baird, referring in a recent letter to a biographical sketch of the late Robert Walsh, prepared in Paris by M. Jomard, says:

"I have said that M. Jomard must now be an old man, but perhaps I ought to take that back—for men in France and Europe generally are not as old at *eighty* as we are at *sixty*. Humboldt at fourscore was not beyond his prime, and Lord Palmerston at three score and fifteen scarcely begins to think of being old. We live *too fast* in this country."

We do live rather fast in this country, but many of us live long too. We believe that our average of longevity is as high as that of any other country, while individual instances can be found that are truly remarkable. We continually hear about Humboldt, Palmerston, and Lord Lyndhurst, but we are apt to forget that their parallels can be not unfrequently found among us. Boston daily sees the venerable Quincy in the enjoyment of all his faculties at the age of 87; and Massachusetts is proud of the rulings and decisions of her Chief Justice, now (if we may be allowed the expression) high up in the seventies. At the Yale Commencement, the other day, none failed to remark the form of professor Silliman, still upright and active under the burden of 80 years; and in our report of the Fort Point Celebration in Maine, last week, we gave an account of a great meeting presided over by a hale old man of 91.

Of our literary men, Irving has just finished the Life of Washington at the age of 76. Paulding is 80, and Richard H. Dana 72. The list in this department, and in those of the professions, might be greatly extended. But let us turn to public life, which, perhaps, makes the greatest, draft upon all powers of the system. Ex-President Van Buren, who has gone through the whole mill, is well and hearty at the age of 77. We have now in the Presidential chair a man of 70, who boasts that he is healthier than his Cabinet, of which, however, the leading member, in the Department of State, is 77. The actual Commander-in-Chief of our armies is 73; and yet if we were called into battle, no man would be thought worthy to take his place. Our Chief Justice is 82; but he works like a clerk, and one of his late decisions, we fear, is to be impressed upon the whole future of our national history. But we need cite no future instances of aged men active, employed in this country. We have done enough to show that Dr. Baird's remarks were not admit of too hasty acceptance. Let us not lay credit ourselves too readily. Perhaps we live in general, quite as long as we ought to considering our multiplied violations of physiological laws, but the vital fibre in this country is amazingly tough.

A MISTAKE.—A young gentleman who had been paying—under protest from her rich father—his addresses to a young lady, had almost given up as a hopeless case, obtained an eligible situation in a foreign mercantile house. Meeting a lady of his acquaintance soon after he had arranged to go abroad he said to her;

If you will promise never to tell it to any one, I'll confide to you a secret."

"Oh, no! *of course* I'll never mention it," said the lady.

He whispered in her ear—

"*My fortune is made!*—*I'm going to Havre!*"

"You don't say so? When?"

"Next week."

They seperated, and the next day the father of the young lady appeared before our hero, flourishing a big cane in his right hand, demanding to know by what authority he had proclaimed that he was about to marry his daughter.

The young man denied the soft impeachment.

"You did!" roared his wouldn't-be father-in-law: "you told Miss Three em dash that you was going to have her next week."

"And so I am—to sail for the port of Havre in the Humbolt."

The old gentleman sloped.—*Boston Museum.*

HONESTY IS THE BEST POLICY.—The late duke of Buccleuch, in one of his walks purchased a cow in the neighborhood of Dalkeith, which was to be sent to his palace on the following morning. The duke in morning dress espied a boy ineffectually attempting to drive the animal forward to its destination. The boy not knowing the duke, bawled out to him:

"Hie, mun, come here an' gie's a han' wi' this at least."

The duke walked on slowly, the boy still craving his assistance, and at last, in a tone of distress, exclaimed:

"Come here, mun, an' help us, an' as shure as onything I'll gie you have I get!"

The duke went and lent a helping hand.

"And now," said the duke, as they trudged along, "how much do you think you'll get for this job?"

"I dinna ken," said the boy, "but I'm sure of something, for the folks up at the big house are gude to a bodies."

As they approached the house the duke disappeared from the boy, and entered a different way. Calling a servant, he put a sovereign into his hand, saying:

"Give that to the boy who brought the cow."

The duke having returned to the avenue, was soon rejoined by the boy.

"Well, how much did you get?" said the duke.

"A shilling," said the boy, "an there's half o' it to ye."

"But you surely got more than a shilling," said the duke.

"No," said the boy, as sure as death that's a' I got; and d'ye no think its plenty?"

"I do not, said the duke; "there must be some mistake; and, as I am acquainted with the duke, if you return I think I'll get you more."

They went back the duke rang the bell, and ordered all the servants to be assembled.

"Now," said the duke to the boy, "point me out the person that gave you the shilling."

"It was that chap there with the apron,' pointing to the butler.

The butler confessed, fell on his knees, and attempted an apology; but the duke indignantly ordered him to give the boy his sovereign, and quit his service instantly.

"You have lost," said the duke, "your money, your situation and your character by your covetousness; learn, henceforth, that honesty is the best policy."

The boy by this time recognized his assistant in the person of the duke; and the duke was so delighted with the sterling worth and honesty of the boy that he ordered him to be sent to school, kept there and provided for at his own expense.

LEGISLATION IN THE NURSERY.—See the young mother in the nursery with an unfolding human character committed to her charge—see her profoundly ignorant of the phenomena with which she has to deal undertaking to do that which can be done but imperfectly, even with the aid of the profoundest knowledge. She knows nothing about the nature of the emotions, their order of evolution, their functions, or where use ends and abuse begins. She is under the impression that some of the feelings are wholly bad, which is not true of any one of them. And then, ignorant as she is of that with which she has to deal, she is equally ignorant of the effects that will be produced on it by this or that treatment. What can be more inevitable than the disastrous results we see hourly arising. Lacking knowledge of mental phenomena, with their causes and consequences, her interference is frequently more mischievous than absolute passivity would have been. This and that kind of action, which are quite normal and beneficial, she perpetually thwarts; and so diminishes the child's happiness and profit, injures its temper and her own, and produces estrangement.

Deeds which she thinks it desirable to encourage, she gets performed by threats and bribes, or by exciting a desire for applause, considering little what the inward motives may be, so long as the outward conduct conforms, and thus cultivating hypocrisy, and fear, and selfishness, in place of good feeling. While insisting on truthfulness she constantly sets an example of untruth, by threatening penalties which she does not inflict. While inculcating self-control, she hourly visits on her little ones angry scoldings for acts that do not call for them. She has not the remotest idea that in the nursery as in the world, that alone is truly salutary discipline which visits on all conduct, good or bad, the natural consequences—the consequences, pleasurable or painful, which in the nature of things such conduct tends to bring. Being thus without theoretic guidance, and quite incapable of guiding herself by tracing the mental processes going on in her children, her rule is impulsive, inconsistent, mischievous often in the highest degree; and would indeed be generally ruinous, were it not that the overwhelming tendency of the growing mind to assume the monotype of the race usually subordinates all minor influences.—*Westminster Review.*

CLERICAL PUNNING.—Parson Twiss of New Hampshire had just married a lady whose christian name was Desire, and it being in his course of remark on a certain Sabbath to illustrate the difference between the renewed and unrenewed man in the exercise of love, he delivered himself, to the amusement of his audience, in this way—"Formerly I had no Desire to love, but now I have a Desire to love, and I love freely."